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AUTHOR	Costello, Joan; Barker, Gary; Pickens, Lisa Marie; Cassaniga, Neide; Merry, Sheila; Falcon, Adrienne
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ABSTRACT

Identifying the voluntary activities, programs, and services that children and families use during students' out-of-school time as primary supports, this self-study guide provides a framework for developing primary support programs that allow school-aged children and adolescents to develop physical, cognitive, social, and emotional skills. The guide details four key program components and describes basic qualities within each component that "good enough" primary supports for school-age children and youth should provide. The guide also provides indicators at three levels and questions that can assist staff and management to set goals and work toward improvements over time. The four components of program quality are: (1) safety, comfort, and belonging; (2) positive social interactions and relationship; (3) activities and programming that promote healthy development; and (4) organizational and administrative competence. For each program component, the key indicators of quality are summarized, with each indicator accompanied by a series of discussion topics/questions. Space is available to record how the organization is doing and what improvements might be considered. The guide concludes with a list of 19 recent publications of Chapin Hall for those planning, managing, funding, and working in programs for youth. (KB)

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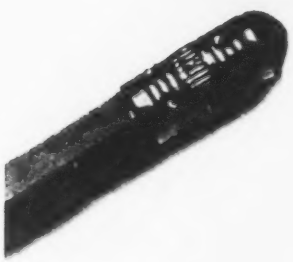
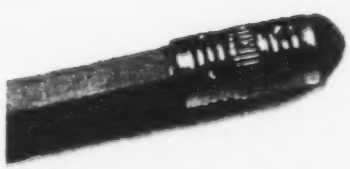
Joan Costello
Gary Barker
Lisa Marie Pickens
Neide Cassaniga
Sheila Merry
Adrienne Falcón
Chapin Hall Center for Children



for Managers and Staff of Primary Support Programs for Young People



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How young people spend their out-of-school time is a widespread public concern. Parents, teachers, educators, business people, those who work in juvenile justice and law enforcement, health and safety professionals, and the public as a whole sometimes worry about risky behaviors and lack of educational support for young people during unsupervised time. Out-of-school time is also a longstanding concern of organizations and individuals that provide the voluntary activities, programs, and services that children and families use. We term such activities, programs, and services "primary supports." Through meaningful participation in such programs, children and youth can also develop self-direction and build identities as persons and citizens who believe they can and should contribute to their communities. This self-study guide is intended to help primary support organizations in their important work.

The Elizabeth Morse Charitable Trust generously supported the development and production of this guide.
PS 10, 2000, Chapel Hill Center for Children

A Self-Study Guide for Managers and Staff of Primary Support Programs for Young People

What Are Primary Supports?

Primary supports are recreational, cultural, civic, and other supportive resources for young people in a community. They include clubs, youth groups, after-school programs, sports teams, and the resources and activities provided by park districts, churches, businesses, community organizations, social agencies, libraries, and museums. They are important because they are typically *voluntary, socially inclusive, and developmentally appropriate. Many promote healthy development and provide social support. Some offer assistance and early referral when problems arise.*[1]

Such community-based activities are *voluntary and socially inclusive* because they are not required and generally are open to interested children and youth in a community. Primary supports are *developmentally appropriate and promote healthy development* by expanding opportunities to experiment with a wide range of activities in a variety of settings with a variety of peers and adults. Even modest programs can prevent exposure to the serious risks that young people can encounter when they have too much time and too little to do. They *provide social support* by helping to bridge the gap between school and home, and by helping children and youth focus their attention, clarify their aspirations, begin to form a coherent identity, and apply what they learn in formal and informal educational settings to the real world around them. Primary supports can prevent minor problems from escalating by offering assistance before serious problems arise and they can refer families to appropriate services.

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[1] Wynn, J., Costello, J., Halpern, R., Richman, H. (1994). *Children, Families and Communities: A new approach to social services.* Chicago: Chapin Hall Center for Children at the University of Chicago.

What Do We Mean By Healthy Development?

Many programs for children and youth, especially those for low-income children and youth, focus on preventing problems such as dropping out of school, delinquency, drug abuse, and early childbearing. These are valid goals. We believe energy should also be focused on socializing, educating, and caring for all children and youth. Doing so can help them to acquire skills, abilities, and attributes that we as individuals, families, adherents to traditional cultures or to modern culture, and members of society value as important in order to function in society and to live as healthy, fulfilled human beings.

Most families, cultural groups, and societies have some goals for what they believe their children should do to become healthy, competent, and fulfilled adults. Although goals differ among groups and families, there are minimal skills for life on which most can agree. At a minimum, these would include abilities to maintain physical vitality, to care for and interact with others in relationships of mutual respect, to use cognitive and social skills resourcefully, and to become connected socially to organizations beyond family and school. We describe these skills below.

- **The ability to maintain physical vitality** includes basic daily self-care as a young child (e.g., dressing, bathing, and feeding oneself), vigorous engagement with the physical world, care for one's health including sexual health later in adolescence and adulthood, healthy lifestyle choices, and seeking health care as needed.
- **The ability to care for others and interact with others in relationships of mutual respect.** Characteristics of this skill include forming and maintaining meaningful friendships throughout life and more intimate relationships in adolescence and adulthood, working well in groups and resolving conflicts peacefully, and investing in the care of children, especially one's own.
- **The cognitive and social abilities to become resourceful.** These include applying what is learned informally and in schools to other aspects of life, developing habits and attributes that contribute to life-long learning, demonstrating creativity and critical thinking in choosing a vocation, seeking skills related to that vocation, and maintaining productive activity. Such activity might include formal employment, self-employment, or nonremunerative activities valued by society.

In a globalizing society, this is likely to include the ability and willingness to learn new work skills over the course of one's life. We include in this category the ability to speak the language of one's own culture as well as the language necessary for functioning in the wider society.

- **The ability to become connected socially** includes continuous relationships to organizations and institutions beyond family and school and development of cultural, civic, and moral and spiritual values and commitments. These include ethnic, cultural, and individual identities that are secure and comfortable; respect for the ethnic, cultural, and individual identities of others; and a level of spiritual development as the individual defines it. We also include here the skills and attributes necessary to see oneself as connected to the broader social and political world as an active participant in social and political life, and as a person whose actions reflect moral commitments and connections to others.

Within each of these four "skills for life," there are numerous other specific skills that children and youth may need, or that families and different cultural groups may view as important. We suggest that all primary supports programs consider how their programs contribute to healthy development. The self-study guide that follows, while based on knowledge of child and adolescent development, focuses on *program* development rather than on individual development.

Why a Self-Study Guide?

In their efforts to encourage high-quality primary supports programs, funders and professionals who are concerned about child and youth development have tended to focus on model or exemplary programs that have potential to promote development and sometimes to transform the lives of children and youth in dramatic ways. Less attention has been given to developing a set of minimum standards or thresholds for all primary supports programs for children. It is important that we also value ordinary programs that offer young people safe places, respectful interactions, and constructive activities in adequately organized settings. Many organizations choose to offer a haven to as many young people as they can, rather than to direct their resources to outstanding programs for fewer participants.

We call programs "good enough" when they meet some basic standards of quality, as many do. We borrowed the term good enough from Winnicott, a child psychiatrist, who taught that good enough parents help most children to develop adequately, meaning that "ideal" parents, while desirable, are not essential.[2] Good enough primary supports can provide a minimum or good enough level of safety, positive social interactions, and activities that contribute to healthy development, in settings that are organized well enough to be predictable and functional.

Organization of the Self-Study Guide

This guide offers a set of four key program components and describes basic qualities within each component that good enough primary supports for school-age children and youth should provide. The guide is useful to programs for young people from six to eighteen years of age, but not all indicators apply to all ages. The self-study guide provides indicators and questions that can assist staff and management to set goals and work towards improvements over time. The indicators are based upon multiple sources of research information, practice wisdom, and program observations. They have been reviewed and field-tested by providers of many kinds of primary supports in Chicago including the Abraham Lincoln Centre, The After School Action Programs, and the Chicago Children's Choir.

Moving from good enough to more advanced indicators of quality within each of the four components of primary supports may be thought of as analogous to climbing a stepladder. A stepladder is useful if it helps us reach what we seek. We don't judge a ladder by its height or number of steps. We climb only as many steps of a ladder as it takes to reach what we want, but we are frustrated if a step is missing. We have listed basic, bottom rung, or good enough indicators that all primary supports programs should have in place because, without them, the development of children may not be adequately protected. We have also listed additional indicators concerned with promoting

[2] Winnicott, D. (1957). *Mother and Child: A primer of first relationships.* New York: Basic Books.

child and adolescent development. Some programs may want to strive for higher standards and can use the questions provided to guide discussion, set goals, and develop strategies to get there.

The four components of program quality are:

- Safety, comfort, and belonging
- Positive social interactions and relationships
- Activities and programming that promote healthy development
- Organizational and administrative competence

Who Should Use This Self-Study Guide?

This guide aims to be a useful and usable tool for program staff, program administrators, and volunteers who work with school-aged children and youth in a variety of settings. In addition to afterschool programs offered by youth centers and social service agencies, there are many other primary support activities that contribute broadly to child and youth development, such as organized sports, park district programs, and activities for children and youth in museums, libraries, and faith communities, among others. The guide offers a series of questions for primary supports staff, managers, and volunteers to ask themselves individually or as a group to (1) review indicators of quality in primary supports programs, (2) examine how well they do in relation to the indicators, and (3) enable them to improve the ways in which they foster the development of children and youth through their programs.

Why Would a Program Carry Out a Self-Study Process?

There are numerous reasons why staff of a primary supports program might want to use this self-study guide. The guide could help a program:

- Improve what staff members already do by helping them reflect purposefully about the program's activities, objectives, and strategies.
- Clarify its goals and justify its activities. Some organizations suggested that it would be most useful as part of strategic planning.
- Measure its performance and assess how effectively it supports development of children and youth through the application of the indicators used in the guide and through the development of other indicators.
- Attract more children and youth to participate in programs and activities, reach beyond the children and youth they usually attract, and involve more parents and community members.
- Raise funds, develop proposals, or carry out advocacy in support of their activities and services.
- Review the match between the program's mission and the ways in which resources are used.

Using the Self-Study Guide

This guide is structured around four essential components of primary supports programs mentioned previously: (1) safety and belonging; (2) positive social interactions and relationships; (3) activities and programming that promote healthy development; and (4) organizational and administrative competence. For each component, we have developed three levels of questions to assess what the organization provides currently and what improvements it might consider. The questions are informed by a review of lessons learned in the field of primary supports, youth development programming, and afterschool programs, and in consultation with a number of Chicago-based primary supports programs.

- **Basic/good enough indicators.** These represent a starting point, or a basic level that programs and activities *should* provide if they are to function as primary supports for young people.

- **Intermediate indicators.** Such indicators are relevant when an organization aims to provide more developmental levels of services and activities.
- **Advanced indicators.** These apply to organizations that wish to consider additional goals and strategies for one or more than one component of primary supports.

The questions in this guide have been useful to individual staff who want to think about their work. They also lend themselves to discussion in a group setting where program staff members can hear one another's ideas about improving program quality. They are not intended to offer prescriptions or recipes for what every primary support organization could or should do. Not every organization will exhibit the characteristics in the form suggested in the guide. For example, an organization may exhibit some of the advanced characteristics, but not the more basic ones. We believe that information deserves discussion to avoid compromising outstanding program qualities by operating on a weak foundation.

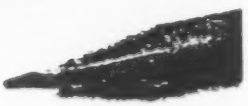
A Scale for Assessing Program Status

We suggest that staff answer the "how are we doing" question by using a 10-point scale, especially at the basic and intermediate levels. For example an organization could decide to position the 10 points as follows, 1 = not so well/not at all, 4 = making slow progress, 7 = doing OK, and 10 = doing well. An organization might use 2 & 3, 5 & 6, 8 & 9 to place a rating between the points specified.

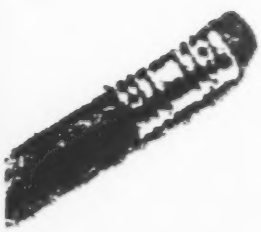
Safety, Comfort, and Belonging

Component 1

Safety, comfort, and belonging include the provision of physically and socially safe spaces that are free from dangers, adequately equipped, and free from threats, criticism, insults, or slurs. Safety also includes developing contingency plans for emergency situations such as storms, accidents, health emergencies, or violence.



When children or adults feel threatened by actual or perceived threats to their physical or social safety, they become vigilant and unable to participate fully or freely in activities and programs. An unsafe place not only fails to promote a child's development, it may fail to protect previous development. Real or perceived threats are not always voiced by children or youth, but they often underlie expressions of boredom, irritability, aggressiveness, excessive silliness, and a general lack of trust. A sense of belonging and even ownership can develop over time in a place where a child feels socially and psychologically safe by incorporating into the physical space aspects of youth culture and diverse individual and cultural identities.



The chart below summarizes key indicators of safety and belonging at three levels.

Indicators of Quality for Component 1

Basic Level: **Maintaining Physical Safety**	Intermediate Level: **Assuring Social and Psychological Safety**	Advanced Level: **Promoting Belonging and Ownership**
A minimum level of physical safety is provided. Children and youth are safe from physical assault outside or inside. There is a telephone children and youth can use if they need to. Children and youth have safe transportation to the program and safe entrances into and exits from the program. Parents' and children's perceptions of physical safety are considered.	Children and youth are safe from humiliation or undue criticism. Program actively promotes and accepts diversity and differences. Children and youth are free to express themselves, to be themselves, and to contribute to creating a space that is theirs.	Children and youth are able to take risks and try new things. The program has rituals and other means to promote a sense of belonging to the organization, the program, and the group.

In the guidelines that follow, each indicator is accompanied by a set of discussion topics. Space is available to record how the organization is doing and what improvements it might consider for the future.

Indicators of Quality at the Basic Level for Component 1

Maintaining Physical Safety

Indicators	What is the evidence?
A minimum level of physical safety is provided.	Our program carried out a physical safety assessment. • What factors were included? • What were the conclusions? • What areas need improvement? • What changes were made as a result? Our program has a contingency plan in case of emergency (accident, violence, storm, etc.) • Have staff and volunteers been trained in or adequately informed of this emergency plan? Our program's staff-child ratio is adequate to assure safety in each of the activities offered.
Children and youth are safe from physical assault both outside and inside our space.	Our program protects children and youth from outside dangers. • In case of outside violence, does our program have a plan of response? Our program has a plan or protocol for dealing with fighting, violence, or intimidation among participants. • How often do violent encounters occur in our space? • Are children and youth consulted about their perceptions of physical assault or intimidation and their ideas on how best to respond?

How are we doing?	How could we improve?

Indicators	What is the evidence?
There is a telephone available for children and youth to use if necessary.	Children and youth can reach a parent. • Are children and youth and parents satisfied with the current system? • Are there ways in which communication between children and parents needs to be improved?
Children and youth have safe transportation to the program and safe entrances into and exits from the program.	Children and youth can get to and leave the program safely. • Is transportation adequate? • Is transportation sometimes an impediment to carrying out programming? Entries and exits are safe. • What has been done to address real or perceived safety problems upon entering or exiting?
Parents' and children's perceptions of physical safety are considered.	Our program consulted with parents and children regarding their perceptions of physical safety in our space. • What factors did parents identify as important to them? • What factors did children and youth identify as concerns? • Do they think it is safe here? Physically? Socially? Emotionally? • How did we, or how could we, take their concerns into account? Our setting is cared for, clean, and inviting. • Walls and bulletin boards are free from dated, inappropriate, or degrading items.

How are we doing?	How could we improve?

Indicators of Quality at the Intermediate Level for Component 1

Assuring Social and Psychological Safety

Indicators	What is the evidence?
Children and youth are safe from humiliation or undue criticism.	Staff create an environment that is free from humiliation. Staff intervene when one child insults or unduly criticizes another. Children and youth positively assess the program approach to criticism and insults from peers and staff.
Program actively promotes and accepts diversity and differences among children and youth.	Children come from different social backgrounds. • How do staff encourage diversity or recruit children from different backgrounds? • What staff practices promote a sense of inclusion and acceptance? • How do staff intervene in a case of prejudice? Children and youth say the program accepts diversity and differences. • What are their ideas about improving the program's acceptance of diversity? Staff and volunteers speak the language of children and youth in our program. Staff are culturally competent in the various ethnic/cultural groups represented in our program.
Children and youth are free to express themselves, to be themselves, and to contribute to creating a space that is theirs.	Program helps children feel they are part owners of the space. • Examples of children's creations or expressions decorate our space. • What could we do to make the space even more conducive to the expressions of young people's interests and views?

Component 1

How are we doing?	How could we improve?

Indicators of Quality at the Advanced Level for Component 1

Promoting Belonging and Ownership

Indicators	What is the evidence?
Children and youth are able to take risks and try new things.	Children and youth report feeling "at home" in our space. Our program helps young people feel safe enough to try new things and new ways of being themselves. • How do we do that? • In what ways has our program encouraged young people to try something just beyond their current abilities? • Is there a way that children and youth can present new ideas or express their desires for new or different activities or opportunities?
The program has symbols or rituals and other means to promote a sense of belonging to the organization, the program, and the group.	Our program has symbols of membership. • What evidence do we have that children and youth feel they are program members? • Did children and youth participate in creating these symbols? The space expresses cultural symbols of participants' cultural heritages. • How might our program improve this feeling of membership?

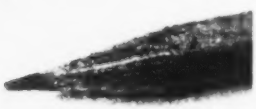
How are we doing?	How could we improve?

Indicators	What is the evidence?
Staff and children and youth have created rituals for daily greetings, opening activities, and departure activities.	Staff/volunteers personally greet every child/youth who comes into the program everyday. • What is this greeting like? There is a daily ritual for starting off program activities. • What is this ritual? • How could the daily ritual be improved? • Do children and youth participate and take ownership of this daily opening ritual? Is there a departure ritual? • What form(s) does it take?

How are we doing?	How could we improve?

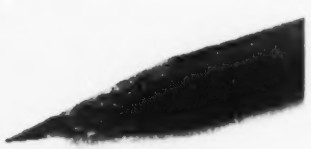
Positive Social Interactions and Relationships

Component 2



Numerous studies and descriptions of programs for children and youth have reported that one of the most important things that children and youth obtain from primary supports programs is a connection to one or more caring adults. When children and youth are asked what they like about programs, they frequently report that they enjoy and value the opportunity to interact with their peers and with responsive adults in ways that are free from fights or criticism.

For young people in some neighborhoods, having a place to interact with prosocial peers is extremely important and can serve as a space where their development is fostered and where they are encouraged to stay in school or stay away from gangs, delinquency, drugs, or unsafe sex. For younger school-age children, having a space to interact with a wider age range of peers in less formal ways than in school offers the chance to develop communication skills and social skills that enhance friendships. For young people who are still experimenting with and defining who they are, and may feel pressure from school, family, or various peer groups to act certain ways, having a space where they can be themselves may be extremely important. All young people appreciate and benefit from the presence of competent, caring adults who are interested in spending time with them and who know how to tune in and support them when they encounter life's challenges.



Indicators of Quality for Component 2

Basic Level: **Respect and Connection**	Intermediate Level: **Engagement and Expansion**	Advanced Level: **Full Involvement**
Staff members interact with children and each other in positive ways. Children are usually respectful of each other, staff, and other adults. Staff members explain and enforce reasonable rules. Staff members make efforts to give each child some attention each day.	Every child is connected to at least one staff member or volunteer. Children engage and interact with each other in relationships of mutual respect. Staff members create rules, in consultation with children. Children have the opportunity to tell their stories and to hear about the realities of other children's lives.	Children are connected to mentors and volunteers based on their expressed interests. Children and youth create their own sense of community and work toward commonly defined goals, activities, or projects. Children and youth participate fully in the life of the organization.

In the guidelines that follow, each indicator is accompanied by a set of discussion questions and space is available to list how the organization is doing and what goals it might consider for the future.

Indicators of Quality at the Basic Level for Component 2

Respect and Connection

Indicators	What is the evidence?
Staff members interact with children and with each other in positive ways.	Our program fosters respectful relationships between staff members and children. • What is the nature of communications from staff members to children? • Do staff members communicate respect for kids in program? How? Staff model appropriate behavior. • How does the program evaluate whether staff and volunteers model appropriate behavior to children? • What is the nature of staff member interactions?
Children are usually respectful of each other.	What is the nature of children's interactions with each other in our program? • Do children know what is expected of them in terms of their interactions with peers? • What does the program do to foster respectful relationships among children? • How does our program promote friendships?
Children are usually respectful of staff members and of other adults.	What is the nature of the children's interactions with staff members in our program? • Do children know what is expected of them in terms of their interactions with staff members and other adults? • What does the program do to foster respectful relationships among staff members and children?

Component 2

How are we doing?	How could we improve?

Indicators	What is the evidence?
Staff members explain and enforce reasonable rules.	Are there rules? Are the rules appropriate? Are the rules widely known, shared, and reinforced?
Staff members make efforts to give each child some attention every day.	Our programs have a system to ensure that there are sufficient staff and volunteers to give some attention to every child. • Do staff/volunteers make an effort to get to know every child? How?

How are we doing?	How could we improve?

Indicators of Quality at the Intermediate Level for Component 2

Engagement and Expansion

Indicators	What is the evidence?
Every child is connected to at least one staff member or volunteer.	Is every child greeted as he/she enters the door? Does the program have a system for assigning children and youth to one or more specific staff or volunteers? What mechanisms exist to ensure that every young person has adequate time/opportunity to interact with the staff individually or in a group setting, formally or informally?
Children engage and interact with each other in relationships of mutual respect.	Are children and youth satisfied with the tone of child-to-child interactions in the program? • Do children have the opportunity to form new friendships? How? • Does the program train staff/volunteers and children and youth in conflict resolution?
Children have the opportunity to tell their stories and to hear about the realities of other children's lives.	Program encourages children to share personal stories and aspects of their families or ethnic/cultural groups. • How are experiences shared? Are children consulted about their interests and desires to express themselves? Program insures that children interact beyond pre-existing cliques and friendships. • What special events encourage social interaction beyond normal daily activities? • Do program staff members find ways to honor the uniqueness of each individual and the cultures represented, as well as common humanity?

Component 2

How are we doing?	How could we improve?

Indicators of Quality at the Advanced Level for Component 2

Full Involvement

Indicators	What is the evidence?
Children are connected to mentors and volunteers based on their expressed interests.	Are children consulted about having special staff members or volunteers chosen for them? • Does the program have a plan in case of staff turnover or a change in staff or volunteer designation? Program has a system for assessing the interests of the child in order to select a mentor. • Does program have a system for gathering feedback from children about their relationships with volunteers, mentors, or staff members? Are outside volunteers or guests invited to offer additional experiences that children request? • Does the program have a roster of volunteers or mentors for different kinds of interests? • How does the program train/supervise mentors or volunteers? • How are potential conflicts between volunteers and staff anticipated and resolved?

Component 2

How are we doing?	How could we improve?

Indicators	What is the evidence?
Children and youth create their own sense of community and work toward commonly defined goals, activities, or projects.	Organization provides opportunities for children and youth to experience the value of teamwork and to seek opportunities to invest in community both at program and neighborhood levels. • Are children and youth encouraged to recognize others' interests and sensitivities and be responsive to them? • Are children and youth helped to recognize their own emotional reactions, to seek and apply coping skills, and to balance self-help and help-seeking? • Do children and youth and staff discuss how their work together can contribute to the social capital of the neighborhood?
Children and youth participate fully in the life of the organization.	• Are managers and staff at ease in their roles as adults who share some institutional functions with young people, especially older youth? • Does the organization provide ways for youth voices and votes to influence programs and organizational development?

How are we doing?	How could we improve?

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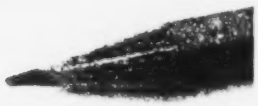
Activities and Programming that Promote Healthy Development

Component 3

The central purpose of most primary supports organizations is to provide constructive activities. However, constructing activities in ways that promote development at appropriate levels is an ongoing challenge. The developmental quality of programs for older children appears to be associated with staff knowledge of child and adolesCent development and staff opportunities to observe and discuss practices that promote the development of young people. Sometimes, effective staff practices may derive from personal experiences with youth programs and activities while they were growing up. High energy, creativity, and deep respect for young people are common qualities of staff who lead effective programs.



Because activities allow for a wide range of developmental opportunities, they can benefit from periodic reexamination. How well are the activities (or the array of activities in programs) addressing the developmental possibilities of current participants? As staff gain experience, do they incorporate additional developmental goals for activities they formerly led? Has the cultural relevance of the activities been reviewed recently?

At the most basic (or good enough) level, activities keep kids occupied and protect their development. At an intermediate level, activities can be constructed to engage them in their own development, to push their own edges. At a more advanced level, young people can be engaged in constructing activities that not only challenge them to grow but that stretch the possibilities of the activities themselves, the engagement of group members in the activities, or the quality of the products of the activities.

Because of the wide range of activities sponsored by primary supports organizations, the indicators of quality and questions for discussion are quite general. Most organizations will want to add additional indicators and specific questions for the activities they offer. It is important for leaders and staff to consider the range of current activities in light of their organizational mission, the range of participant ages and backgrounds, the effectiveness of outreach to intended participants, the responsiveness of the activities and programming to the cultural heritage of intended participants, and the atmosphere within which activities are offered.

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Indicators of Quality for Component 2

Basic Level: **Providing Constructive Activities**	Intermediate Level: **Providing Enjoyable, Developmentally Appropriate Activities**	Advanced Level: **Constructing Playful, Mindful Activities Together**
Youth choose activities. Activities hold the interest of young people. There is a balance between structured and unstructured time. There are connections among home, school, and programs.	Participants have a sense of accomplishment as well as fun. Positive peer connections are made. Developmental goals are explicit and staff members understand the developmental capabilities of the children they serve.	Participant engagement. Personal skills and productivity are valued. Playfulness and mindfulness are valued. Community is valued.

In the guidelines that follow, each indicator is accompanied by a set of discussion topics, and space is available to record how the organization is doing and what goals it might consider for the future.

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Indicators of Quality at the Basic Level for Component 3

Providing Constructive Activities

Indicators	What is the evidence?
Youth choose activities.	There is some variety of activities. • Is some choice permitted? Staff members seek input from youth. • How and how often do staff seek input?
Activities hold the interest of young people.	Enrollment is stable or increasing. Attendance is high. • Do young people complain of boredom? Staff members are engaged. • Are staff members often bored or passive?
There is a balance between structured and unstructured time.	Time is spent in structured and unstructured activities. • How much time is spent in each? There are designated times for socializing. • How are structured activities and socializing balanced?

Component 3

How are we doing?	How could we improve?

Indicators	What is the evidence?
There are connections among home, school, and programs.	Efforts are made to reinforce home and school values and practices when appropriate. Staff ask about home and school and make constructive connections to them. • How often and in what ways do staff members ask about home and school? • How often do staff members talk to parents? • How does feedback from parents and teachers systematically enter into the planning process? • Are activity or program goals considered in relation to home and school goals and practices? Are community goals considered? Educational support is available when needed even if not a routine part of the program. • Does our organization assume any responsibility for educational programs? • How do we identify and address educational problems?

How are we doing?	How could we improve?

Indicators of Quality at the Intermediate Level for Component 3

Providing Enjoyable, Developmentally Appropriate Activities

Indicators	What is the evidence?
Participants have a sense of accomplishment as well as a sense of fun.	Progress is monitored, measured, and celebrated. How, how often, and how realistically?
Positive peer connections are made.	We offer opportunities for prosocial peers to lead activities. • How do more capable peers model behavior and mentor? Are we challenging socially marginal young people to take leadership roles? • What strategies do we use?
Developmental goals are explicit and staff members understand the developmental capabilities of the children they serve.	Parents are consulted about the desirable mix and focus of activities. Staff set development goals for each time period. • How do staff learn about development and reasonable goals for kids? • In what areas are developmental goals set (e.g., problem solving, planning, conflict resolution, self-calming, anger management, empathy, helping communication)? Ages and individual differences of participants are taken into account. • How? How extensive is that consensus? Have the developmental implications of the organizational mission been identified and reviewed? • Can we list them readily?

Component 3

How are we doing?	How could we improve?

Indicators of Quality at the Advanced Level for Component 3

Creating Playful, Mindful Activities Together

Indicators	What is the evidence?
Participant engagement.	Young people have a sense of where an activity is going, or might go. • Whose job is it to give them that sense? Young people influence the future shape of activities/programs. • Is there a youth advisory council? • Do youth evaluate programs? • Are there occasional "town meetings" or focus groups?
Personal skills and productivity are valued.	Young people's developmental strengths are incorporated into activities. Young people are helped to connect their personal strengths and the activities of their multiple contexts so they can integrate their internal and external lives. • Are there opportunities to retell life stories with positive "next chapters"? Efforts are made to cite evidence that participants are becoming more productive in whatever arena is relevant. • Are there recognition events?

Component 3

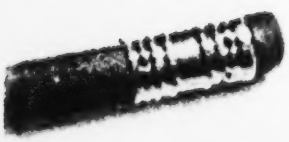
How are we doing?	How could we improve?

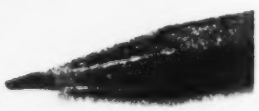
Indicators	What is the evidence?
Playfulness and mindfulness are fostered.	Young people recognize that mental as well as physical play help them reach for dreams and develop capacities. • How is that developed? Staff members foster close attention to moment-to-moment events, feelings, etc., that help to focus attention on personal development. • Do staff members receive regular consultations, in-service workshops, or take time to deepen capacities to do this?
Community is valued.	Personal development is linked to the activity and development of others in the "community" of the activity. There are opportunities to participate in organizational decisions, to have both voice and vote on activities. Is community service a priority? • If yes, how is community service pursued? • Does the organization, through its activities, recognize its potential for building social capital in local communities? • Are participants made aware that developing organizational skills will be useful in other activities or settings?

How are we doing?	How could we improve?

Organizational and Administrative Competence

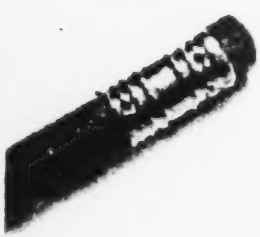
Component 4





Many primary supports programs are offered by small organizations that typically struggle to balance administrative and program considerations. Similarly, larger organizations often limit resources devoted to administrative staff and structure to give as much financial support to programs as possible. Funds for primary support programs—whether situated within large or small organizations—are often limited and unpredictable. A common result is that primary supports programs often rest upon vulnerable administrative foundations.

Administrators may be praised for their decisions to keep administrative structures lean, but the effects are often detrimental because of lack of necessary information, scheduling capabilities, supplies, back-up staff, supervision, training, and other resources necessary to develop activities and programs and to address the potentials and needs of participants. At times, staff may be grateful for the freedom from bureaucratic strictures, but that freedom is often tempered by frustrations that arise when trying to make do, frustrations that can lead to burnout. For participants, organizational inadequacies can be experienced as a lack of caring and predictability, and a sense of being in a place that is chaotic and not quite safe. Both adults and children tend to divide their attention between the source of unpredictability and the activities that have the potential to promote their development.



We included organizational and administrative considerations among the four essential components of primary supports programs because the other components of programs cannot function well otherwise. The indicators that follow are of a general nature as organizations differ remarkably in many ways. Staff and managers may want to add considerations for their particular circumstances.

The table below summarizes key indicators at three levels of organizational and administrative development.

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Indicators of Quality for Component 4

Basic Level: **Predictability and Consistency**	Intermediate Level: **Organized Well Enough to Support Programs**	Advanced Level: **Organized Strategically to Promote Development**
There is a basic understanding of organization's mission and structure among staff and participants.	There is a shared understanding of the organization's structure, among staff, participants, and parents.	The organization has an ongoing mechanism for assessing the quality and usefulness of its services, has developed relationships with the community to facilitate appropriate referrals and to improve its own service quality, and regularly assesses who it is not reaching and considers new approaches to improve outreach.
Staffing levels and schedules ensure safety, adequate programming, and some degree of continuity. Staff are supported and reasonably prepared to do their jobs.	The roles and responsibilities of staff members and volunteers are clear and both have appropriate support. Efforts are in place to encourage staff members' longevity by engaging them in program planning. Opportunities are provided for staff members to improve their job skills.	Staff members have opportunities to learn from individuals outside our organization. Staff members are encouraged to develop a sense of program ownership by being involved in defining the program's mission and planning for its future.
Program meets regularly, as scheduled.	Program monitors the range and amount of programming provided.	Strategies are in place to guarantee progress on a reasonable timetable.
The rules/procedures are clear to the participants.	Parents are kept informed of program activities and problems.	Young people and their parents are respected and engaged as, important participants in program planning and service provision.
Necessary supplies are available.	Supplies expand the range of resources available to young people.	
Budgets are in place for each program and are compared to expenses regularly.		

In the guidelines that follow, each indicator is accompanied by a set of discussion topics, and space is available to record how the organization is doing and what goals it might consider for the future.

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Indicators of Quality at the Basic Level for Component 4

Predictability and Consistency

Indicators	What is the evidence?
There is a basic understanding of organization's mission and structure among staff and participants.	Mission and structure are posted. • Do new staff get written as well as oral briefing?
Staffing levels and patterns ensure safety, adequate programming, and some degree of continuity. Staff are supported and reasonably prepared to do their jobs.	Our program has enough adults available to organize and supervise the planned activities. • Are staff members often absent during activity or in general? • Do staff members arrive on time? We have routines to accommodate staff absences so programming can take place. • Is there a supervisor or backup person available on a regular basis? • In case of emergency, are staff and policies in place to ensure participant safety? Staff have training to maintain safety, interact positively, and lead activities. • Are resources available for staff to receive help in addressing problems? Staff priorities are clearly set out regarding: • Attendance • Arrival and departure • Appropriate behavior with kids and each other • Personal phone calls and visitors

How are we doing?	How could we improve?

Indicators	What is the evidence?
	• Attention to kids rather than other staff • Confidentiality • Record-keeping
Program meets regularly, as scheduled.	Activities take place regularly. Activities begin and end on time. Rooms and equipment are scheduled reliably. • Is there a plan for communicating with participants when activities are cancelled or relocated?
Program rules and procedures are clear to the participants.	Clear rules for participants are posted in the facility. • Are there rules? • Are they posted?
Necessary supplies are available.	A designated staff member keeps inventory, orders supplies, and handles repairs.
Budgets are in place for each program and are compared to expenses regularly.	We know how much money is available to run this program. • Do we have a budget outlining how we plan to spend the money? • Do we regularly compare actual expenditures to budget and adjust plans accordingly? We have a fundraising and fund management policy. We have a staff compensation and benefits policy.

How are we doing?	How could we improve?

Indicators of Quality at the Intermediate Level for Component 4

Organized Well Enough to Support Programs

Indicators	What is the evidence?
There is a shared understanding of the organization's structure, among staff, participants, and parents.	Periodic reviews of organizational structure occur.
The roles and responsibilities of staff members and volunteers are clear and both have appropriate support. Efforts are in place to encourage staff members' longevity by engaging them in program planning. Opportunities are provided for staff members to improve their job skills.	Staff members have written job descriptions. The organization has clear, written policies regarding parental consent for participants' transportation and consent for field trips, release of children to other adults, and excluding youth from program due to behavior. Staff meetings are held on a regular basis to share information and ideas and to plan activities. Staff who spend the most time with kids have adequate skills to meet the needs of participants. • How do staff deepen their understanding of child and adolescent development? • Have staff learned a variety of conflict resolution and other communication skills that are used consistently? Staff stability is addressed regularly. • Do you have difficulty filling available positions? • Have you explored with current and departing staff what changes might be made to encourage longevity? Staff members have regular supervision/mentoring meetings with a more experienced staff member.

How are we doing?	How could we improve?

Indicators	What is the evidence?
Program monitors the range and amount of programming provided.	We have an appropriate way to keep track of the number of children served by each program. • Have we thougnt about ways to track extra service we provide, such as referrals, family support, or other activities?
Parents are kept informed of program activities and problems.	Staff members make some contact with parents at the time of registration. Parents are kept informed of program plans. How? Parents are engaged in problem-solving sessions when there are problems with their children.
Supplies expand the range of resources available to young people.	Supplies are available. Equipment is in good working order. We offer young people access to a range of resources they may not otherwise experience.

How are we doing?	How could we improve?

Indicators of Quality at the Advanced Level for Component 4

Organized Strategically to Promote Development

Indicators	What is the evidence?
The organization has ongoing mecnanisms for assessing the quality and usefulness of its services, has developed relationships with the community to facilitate appropriate referrals and to improve its own service quality, and regularly assesses who it is not reaching and considers new approaches to improve mix of participants.	Staff members assess how kids are doing. • How do we assess how well our program is meeting its goals? • What are the three most important things we offer (want for) young people? • Are our resources distributed proportionately to our goals? When did we last examine our enrollment? • Are we serving the kids we want to serve? • Which kids would we like to involve who aren't here? When did we last examine our ways of communicating with kids and families? • What might be changed? What relationships do we or should we have with schools, mental health providers, or other primary supports providers to facilitate referrals and improve our own services? Is our organization part of any network of services or community planning groups?
Staff members have opportunities to learn from individuals outside our organization.	We sometimes bring in individuals from outside our organization to do staff training. Staff members have opportunities to go to training provided outside our organization. Staff members have opportunities to join with staffs from other organizations for joint training or information sharing.

How are we doing?	How could we improve?

Indicators	What is the evidence?
Staff members are encouraged to develop a sense of program ownership by being involved in defining the program's mission and planning for its future.	• Are staff members actively engaged in organizational planning? • Have staff members participated in a strategic planning process to help to define the organization's future plans?
Strategies are in place to guarantee progress on a reasonable timetable.	We engaged in a strategic planning process to involve staff, parents, volunteers, and participants in considering the service needs of our communit and our vision for meeting them over the next years. We have a board development program. • How are board members educated about programs and needs of local youth? • How often is board structure and composition evaluated in relation to mission and current goals?
Young people and their parents are respected and engaged as important participants in program planning and service provision.	Young people participate and provide input that is taken seriously. • Do youth have opportunities to provide leadership to younger children through training, coaching, or mentoring? • Are youth actively engaged in organizational planning as a valued part of the program's community? Parents are given opportunities to discuss their own interests and needs and those of their children and how this organization could better address them. Parents are encouraged to participate as volunteers (or staff) in either service provision or program planning.
Efforts are in place to encourage staff members' longevity by engaging them in program planning.	Opportunities are provided for staff members to improve their job skills.
Volunteers are active participants in organizational planning and service provision.	Experienced volunteers are involved in the recruitment, training, and support of new volunteers to your organization. • Are volunteers actively engaged with staff in the planning for program services?

How are we doing?	How could we improve?

The Guide is just one of Chapin Hall's recent publications for those planning, managing, funding, and working in programs for youth. Most of these publications are available at low cost from Chapin Hall. Some of them, including this guide, can be downloaded at no charge from our web site, www.chapin.uchicago.edu. (Downloadable publications are marked with an asterisk.)

A Kappan *Special Section on Youth & Caring* by Robert Chaskin and Diana Mendley Rauner (A reprint from Kappan) 1995, $5

Administrative Resources and Supports for Grassroots Youth Programs: The Challenges to Providers and Ideas for Targeted Support by Susannah Quern & Diana Mendley Rauner, 1998, $5*

Arts Opportunities for Young People in Chicago by Ameila Kohm, Joan Costello, & Jennifer Fenton, 2000, $8*

Beyond Home and School: The Role of Primary Supports in Youth Development by Sheila Merry, 2000, $12*

A Case Study of the Tutor/Mentor Connection of Cabrini Connections: An Effort to Build a Supportive Infrastructure of Tutoring and Mentoring Programs in Chicago by Amelia Kohm, 1998, $5*

Children, Families, and Communities: A New Approach to Social Services by Joan Wynn, Joan Costello, Robert Halpern, & Harold Richman, 1994, $12

Children, Families, and Communities: Early Lessons From A New Approach to Social Services by Joan Wynn, Sheila Merry, & Patricia Berg, 1995, $5

The Children, Youth, and Families Initiative: A Mid-Course Report by Joan Costello, Sheila Merry, Stephen Baker, & Lisa Marie Pickens, 1998, $5

The Children, Youth, and Families Initiative: An Overview of Communities by Ali Abunimah, Stephen Baker, Gary Barker, Selma Chipenda-Dansokho, Joan Costello, Earl Durham, Don Reneau, Layla Suleiman, 1998, $5

Contributions of Caring to Community Building by Rebecca Stone, 1997, $5.

Cooperating to Survive and Thrive: Innovative Enterprises Among Nonprofit Organizations by Amelia Kohm, 1998, $5 (A reprint from *Nonprofit World*)

Determinants of Youth Participation in Primary Supports: What Can be Learned from Research by Eric Lock & Joan Costello, 2000, $5

Enhancing Social Services for Children and Families by Joan Wynn, 1995, $5 (A reprint from *Public Welfare*)

The Evolution of Youth Programming: Implications of Funding Trends and Agency Policies for Program Offerings by Susannah Quern, Diana Mendley Rauner, & Darchelle Garner, 2000, $5*

Exploring the Scope of Primary Supports in an Urban Area by Amelia Kohm & Sunil Garg, 1998, $5*

Recruitment, Training and Retention of Volunteers in Youth-Serving Organizations: A Review of the Literature by Barbara Sitrin, 2000, $5*

Sports and Recreation for Chicago Youth: Existing Services, Opportunities for Improvement by Diana Mendley Rauner, Laurence Stanton, & Joan Wynn, 1994, $5

Strategic Restructuring: A Study of Integrations and Alliances Among Nonprofits in the U.S., Report on Phase 1 by Amelia Kohm, David La Piana, & Heather Gowdy, 2000, $8*

The Still Pick Me Up When I Fall: The Role of Caring in Youth Development and Community Life by Diana Mendley Rauner, 2000. Available from Columbia University Press for $21.50 (softcover) or $42.00 (hardcover)

at the University of Chicago
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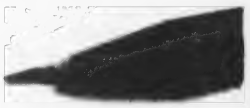
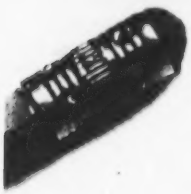
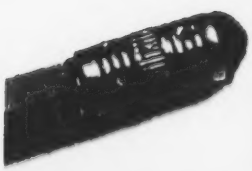
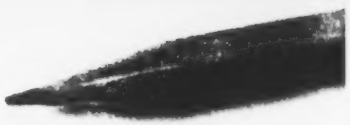
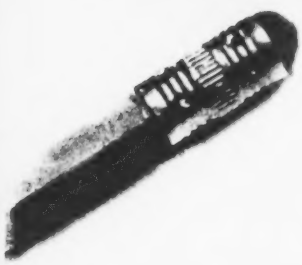
773/753-5900

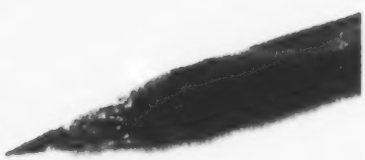












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Chicago, IL 60637
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